"MOTERŲ DIRVA" in its 49th year

ESTABLISHED IN 1916

The A.L.R.C. Women's Alliance differs from other women's clubs in that it is not only a national-fraternal organization, which concerns itself with materialistic aid to its membership, but one which endeavers to be a means by which its members can make a significant contribution to society.

During the first days of its existence, when it was so vitally important to attract and interest women in its purpose and to keep them informed of impending plans of action, "sąjungietės" took to their pens. The first "Women's Section" appeared in 1914 on the pages of Chicago's Lithuanian Catholic daily newspaper, "Draugas." Rev. F. S. Kemesis, editor, assigned the column to Miss Ursula T. Jokubauskas, who later inaugurated the same type of section in the "Darbininkas," a semi-weekly newspaper published by the Franciscan Fathers in Brooklyn, N.Y. The columns were titled, "The Hearth" and "Women's Field." The present "Women's Field" became an off-shoot of these columns and their eventual successor.

ESTABLISHMENT AND BRIEF HISTORY

The Alliance's second convention meeting during July 5-6, 1916, in So. Boston, Mass., put in motion its desire to establish its own publication and requested Miss Jokubauskas to be its editor and administrator. The first issue was published October, 1916 and was greeted with notable pride and exhilaration. While its pages were few, it was the organization's very own. The editor's message was addressed not only to the membership, and said in part: "In spite of the foreboding and gloomy atitude on the part of many people from whom we had anticipated favorable response — entering the Lithuanian community is the long-awaited 'Moterų Dirva'..." The first issue set the pace for the future: full coverage of organizational news, an exchange of ideas, suggestions and helpful hints, with space for the works of acknowledged authors and poets and encouragement to the fledgling. There were items of interest concerning women in general and their progress and re-awakening in the New World.

With the publication of the December, 1917, issue, Mrs. Daukantas (Jokubauskas) resigned from her post and further publication was temorarily suspended. At the urging of the Supreme Officers, Rev. P. Juskaitis of Cambridge, Mass., edited and published five consecutive issues from March through July, 1918.

To carry on this much-needed work, the fourth convention convening in Baltimore, Md., chose an editorial board to continue publication of the "Moterų Dirva." Elected to the board were Chicagoans Mrs. A. Nauseda, editor; Miss M. Gurinskas, administrator; and, Miss. B. Abromavicius, contributor.

Their first endeavor appeared November, 1918. In her first editorial, Mrs. Nauseda indicated the deep desire of the Alliance to clearly set and define its purpose and undertakings, to see them in true perspective and to make better progress, in these words: "During the past years, the women of America have not made a significant inroad in their mode of life; the most important step made by Lithuanian women with a serious desire for betterment began with the organization of the A.L.R.C. Women's Alliance, and the establishment of its publication 'Moterų Dirva.' It was, indeed, a big step forward, but the greatest tasks are still ahead."

With renewed spirit, the publication was published regularly; with experience and additional contributors, it improved in stature and content.

Mrs. Nauseda editted the publication until May, 1923. She was followed by another Chicagoan, Mrs. Sophia Sakalas, who compiled the following issues and remained in her post until August, 1951.

While a habitual task can oftentimes lead to boredom, it did not stifle Mrs. Sakalas' enthusiasm and interest during her 28 year tenure. In the 25th anniversary edition, she states: "'Women's Field' today, if we were to compare it in age to a person, has reached its pinnacle of strength; it has expanded and become more comprehensive. Therefore, it may not occur to us to think about its future. We have gained experience, we have learned to work together and undoubtedly we agree that our organization could not get along without its publication. So, as we begin the second quarter of organizational activity, let us use our magazine as a means of banding together the greatest number of Lithuanian Catholic women under the banner of the Alliance..."

The 24th convention assembled in Putnam, Conn. elected Mrs. Matilda Paulukonis of Worcester, Mass. editor-administrator. Her term began Sept. 1951 and terminated Sept. 1955. Assuming her position, the new editor stated: "I realize that I have taken an immense task upon myself. I will endeavor to complete this task well... 'Women's Field' will continue to carry on as it has in the past..." And so it did — the thread of continuity and communication was not broken. In addition to the required organizational material, informative as well as new and original articles were offered. For the sake of convenience, the printing was transferred from Chicago to Immaculata Press, Putnam, Conn.

Succeeding Mrs. Paulukonis was Mrs. Dale Murray of Chicago; Elected editor-administrator at the 26th convention held in Worcester, Mass., she has continued to edit the publication since October, 1955. Administrative duties were assumed by Miss Ann Ivins of Chicago in October, 1963.

Taking over this responsible task, Mrs. Murray addressed the members in part: "Let us focus our eyes on the future... Our publication is especially important to us as an instrument which enjoins us in organizational knowlegeability'..." Once again, Draugas Publishing Co. was chosen for the printing.

At Mrs. Murray's suggestion, a literary contest was held in order to "budge and encourage more writers and contributors," and later a contest to inspire new cover designs was promoted. The "Women's Field" took on a new appearance with changes in covers, format and contents, which continue to keep the membership interested and informed.